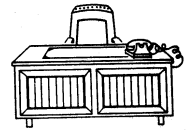


Easter Sunday

April 21, 2019



From the Desk of
Fr. Romanus

Dear Parishioners,

The Lord Is Risen, Alleluia!

This has been a busy week with several intense liturgical experiences. **Palm Sunday**, the celebration of Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem, coupled with the proclamation of the passion narrative, set the tone for the rest of Holy Week.

Holy Week has a long history that dates back to the early church. You will find the earliest mention of Holy Week observances in early church documents like *The Apostolic Constitutions*, the *Canonical Epistle of Dionysius of Alexandria*, and the *Pilgrimage of Egeria*. Though some things have changed over the years, Holy Week remains a time of intense prayerful devotion and celebration of God's sacrificial love.

The celebration of the Passover meal on **Holy Thursday** marked the institution of the Eucharist. The Eucharist is at the center of the Church's liturgical life. It is the 'source and summit of the Christian life' (LG, no. 11). While instituting the Eucharist, Jesus also instituted the Priesthood. The two go hand-in-hand since we cannot have one without the other. Priesthood in the Church has its origin in Jesus Christ, our Most High Priest. Another remarkable event of Holy Thursday was the washing of feet. This existed as a separate rite from 1570 until 1955 when Pope Pius XII inserted it into the rite for Holy Thursday. By washing the apostles' feet, Jesus underscored his teaching on leadership as service.

On **Good Friday**, we celebrated Jesus' redemptive suffering by venerating the cross. The passion narrative reminded us of the intense suffering, public humiliation, and death of Jesus for our salvation. The solemn celebration on Good Friday began with the priest and assisting ministers prostrating before the altar as a sign of humility before God. Of course, there was no Mass on Good Friday and during the day on Holy Saturday because the Church can only pray effectively through the "living" Christ. Hence, like famished and petrified children, the Church prayerfully awaited the Lord's resurrection with solemn anticipation.

Easter Vigil is a breath of new life as the Church proclaims with uttermost gusto that the Lord has risen, and the universal Church echoes glorious songs of victory. The service of light, which includes the blessing of fire and lighting of the Easter candle, marks the transition from darkness into light. The renunciation of sin and renewal of baptismal promises captured the sense of re-birth. This year's celebration includes the welcoming of our new members, Charles and Ugo, candidates in the RCIA program, who receives the Sacraments of Initiation.

Easter Sunday is the oldest and most important feast of the Church's liturgical calendar. Pope Leo the first referred to it as the feast of all feasts - *festum festorum* (Latin). Jesus' resurrection is the light at the end of the tunnel and overshadows the preceding events of Holy Week. The resurrection gives us tremendous hope that when we are done with this life, God will raise us to a new life in Christ. The thought of sharing in the resurrection experience emboldens us when faced with death or the prospect of dying. St. Paul stated that if our hope in Christ was limited to this life, we would have been the most pitiable of all people (1Cor. 15:19). However, to rise with Christ, one must also learn to die with Christ.

As we gather with family and friends for Easter, let us not forget the reason for the celebrations, that is, the resurrection of Christ. We believe that if we die with him, we will also rise with him. I pray that God will fill you with the light of the resurrection and banish all fear, anxiety and despair. We welcome our newly baptized children Angel and Anthony.

Wishing everyone a glorious Easter! Fr. Romanus